

INCREASED SPEED OF UNITED STATES MAILS FROM ST.
JOSEPH, MISSOURI, TO PLACERVILLE, CALIFORNIA.

MESSAGE

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

ASSIGNING HIS REASONS

For failing to approve "A joint resolution in regard to carrying the United States mails from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Placerville, California."

JANUARY 7, 1859.—Ordered to be printed.

To the House of Representatives:

On the last day of the last session of Congress, as appears by the journal of the House of Representatives, "a joint resolution in regard to the carrying the United States mails from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Placerville, California," was presented to me for my approval. This resolution authorized and directed the Postmaster General "to order an increase of speed upon said route, requiring the mails to be carried through in thirty days (instead of thirty-eight days, according to the existing contract) provided the same can be done upon a pro rata increase of compensation to the contractors."

I did not approve this joint resolution, first, because it was presented to me at so late a period that I had not the time necessary on the day of the adjournment of the last session for an investigation of the subject. Besides, no injury could result to the public, as the Postmaster General already possessed the discretionary power under existing laws to increase the speed upon this as well as all other mail routes. Second, because the Postmaster General, at the moment in the Capitol, informed me that the contractors themselves had offered to increase the speed on this route to thirty instead of thirty-eight days, at a less cost than that authorized by the joint resolution. Upon subsequent

examination it has been ascertained at the Post Office Department that their bid, which is still depending, proposes to perform this service for a sum less by forty-nine thousand dollars than that authorized by the resolution.

JAMES BUCHANAN.

WASHINGTON, *January 7, 1859.*